United Nations ST/IC/2003/65

Secretariat

12 December 2003

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff at Offices away from Headquarters

From: The Controller

Subject: **Vanbreda medical, hospital and dental insurance**

I. Renewal provisions for 2004

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to set out the provisions concerning the renewal of the Vanbreda hospital, medical, and dental insurance plan for staff members at Offices away from Headquarters New York, which will take effect on 1 January 2004, and specifically to announce:

(a) Changes in the premium and contribution rates which will come into effect on 1 January 2004 (see chart in para. 8);

(b) The availability of a new option to have claim reimbursements directly deposited into a participant's bank account (see paras. 10-12 below);

(c) The availability of a Vanbreda dedicated web site for United Nations participants (see para. 13 below);

(d) The advantages of using Vanbreda identification cards (see para. 14 below);

(e) The change in the insurance carrier's official name from J. Van Breda & Company International to Vanbreda International.

2. The Vanbreda plan is a global scheme covering staff members and former staff members who reside in all parts of the world, **except** the United States of America (see also para. 17). Staff members, former staff members and their dependants **who reside in the United States of America are not eligible for coverage** under the Vanbreda plan. The sole exception to this exclusion arises in the case of a dependent child attending school or university in the United States, who is required to have the health insurance coverage mandated by the educational institution. In this case, the student's health insurance plan will be primary and the Vanbreda coverage will be secondary.

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2004.

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3. Pending the issuance of an administrative instruction setting out the eligibility criteria and enrolment rules and procedures governing United Nations contributory health insurance, the existing conditions governing eligibility and enrolment for the Vanbreda plan are summarized in paragraphs 16 to 35 of the present circular.

Annual enrolment campaign

4. Staff members are reminded that the annual enrolment campaign will be the only opportunity in 2004 to enrol themselves and eligible family members in the Vanbreda plan. The annual enrolment campaign for the Vanbreda plan at duty stations around the world is scheduled to be held from 7 to 18 June 2004.

Premium levels and benefits

5. The annual cost of the Vanbreda plan reflects claims incurred for hospitalization, medical and dental treatment in all parts of the world and therefore reflects widely varying price levels. In the light of this, different premium rate groups have been established under the plan so that the loss ratios, that is, the ratio of claim reimbursement to premium paid, would be more or less equal among all locations for which the rate group is applicable.

6. The financial performance of the plan for the past policy period reflected increasing medical inflation and utilization. As a result, premium levels for 2004 will increase by 10 per cent for participants worldwide with the exception of staff and retirees residing in Chile, Mexico and Western Europe. Premium rates for participants in Chile and Mexico will remain unchanged. Effective 1 January 2004, the rates in place for Chile and Mexico will also become applicable to participants residing in Western Europe owing to the sustained high level of medical costs in the countries of that region and the ongoing excess of claims reimbursed over premium collected.

7. In line with the methodology used in the calculation of staff contributions towards premiums for other United Nations insurance schemes, the premium contributions of participants in the Vanbreda scheme are determined as a percentage of their respective medical net salaries[1] by applying the rates set out in paragraph 8 below. The percentage contribution rates have been computed to take into account the requirement for an overall 50:50 cost-sharing relationship between the Organization and participants in the plan.

8. The schedule of premiums that will become effective on 1 January 2004, as well as the related staff contribution rates, are set out in the table below.

[1] Medical net salary consists of gross salary, less staff assessment, plus language allowance, non-resident's allowance and post adjustment, as applicable. In no case will staff contributions be greater than 85 per cent of the total premiums.

Type of coverage	Monthly premium (United States dollars)			Percentage of medical net salary		
	Effective 1 January			Effective 1 January		
	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
A. All duty stations (other than Western Europe, Chile and Mexico)						
Staff member only	89.00	89.00	98.00	1.31	1.31	1.34
Staff member and one family member	190.00	190.00	209.00	2.05	2.05	2.10
Staff member and two or more eligible family members	314.00	314.00	345.00	3.28	3.28	3.36
B. Western Europe, Chile and Mexico						
Staff member only	160.00	160.00	160.00	2.32	2.32	2.32
Staff member and one family member	337.00	337.00	337.00	3.78	3.78	3.78
Staff member and two or more eligible family members	557.00	557.00	557.00	5.99	5.99	5.99

Hospital room rate maxima

9. The daily room rate maxima for hospital accommodation reimbursable under the plan will continue, as follows:

(a) **Europe and North America.** The maximum reimbursement per day for hospital accommodation (room and board) in Europe and North America is $600. Details concerning the application of the $600 per day limit for hospitalization in the United States are set out in annex II to the present circular. Semi-private room accommodation is the normal standard in Europe and North America. Only under the following conditions, subject to the provision of documentation satisfactory to the insurer, will private-room care be reimbursed in full, up to the $600 daily limit:

(i) When the nature and gravity of the illness requires private-room care and the need for such care is substantiated by the attending physician;

(ii) When the patient is admitted on an emergency basis to a hospital that has semi-private accommodation but none is available at the time;

(iii) When the patient is admitted to a hospital that does not have any semi-private accommodation, that is, it has no standard of accommodation other than private rooms and general wards;

(b) **Israel.** The daily room rate cap applicable in Israel is $700. This reimbursement ceiling conforms to the nationally uniform semi-private hospital accommodation rate in that country;

(c) **Rest of world.** A $330 per day reimbursement ceiling is applicable to all locations other than Europe, North America and Israel.

Direct deposit of claims reimbursements into bank accounts

10. Effective 1 January 2004, participants may opt to have their claims reimbursements deposited directly into their bank accounts. The deposit will be in United States dollars only. Election of this option can be made on the claim form which is posted on the United Nations insurance Internet web site, www.un.org/insurance, as well as on Vanbreda's dedicated web site for United Nations participants, www.vanbreda-international.be. Usage of the claim form available on the Vanbreda web site is recommended since it facilitates the settlement of claims by printing the participant's name and Vanbreda reference number as well as a corresponding bar code on the form.

11. The direct deposit option will not be available for deposits into bank accounts in the following countries: Nauru, Serbia and Montenegro, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Myanmar, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba, Liberia and the Sudan.

12. The new Vanbreda claim form will ask for the following bank information:

(a) Bank name and full address;

(b) Bank account number;

(c) Account holder's name;

(d) IBAN code (International Bank Accounts Number) for cross border payments within the European Union;

(e) Bank identification code: SWIFT code.

Vanbreda dedicated web site/Vanbreda identification cards/Official designation

13. Vanbreda has created a dedicated section on its web site, www.vanbreda-international.be in respect of the United Nations worldwide Vanbreda plan. This section can be accessed by logging on with a personal reference number indicated on the most recent membership card mailed to all participants in September 2003. The site provides details regarding: (i) benefits; (ii) how to arrange for direct billing; (iii) how to submit a claim; (iv) provision for the downloading of a form, e.g., claim form; (v) contact information at Vanbreda; and (vi) a provider list enabling a participant to select medical providers based upon location and medical specialization.

14. The Vanbreda identification card mailed to all participants enables a hospital or clinic to contact Vanbreda in order to set up a direct billing arrangement in respect of hospitalization or high-cost out-patient treatment. Participants who did not receive an identification card or need a replacement card should contact Vanbreda (please refer to para. 39).

15. **Please note that Vanbreda is formally known as Vanbreda International.** Prior to this renewal, it had been designated as J. Van Breda & Company International.

II. Eligibility criteria and enrolment rules

Eligibility for enrolment in the Vanbreda plan

16. Except for staff members whose duty station is within the United States and locally recruited staff members at duty stations where the Medical Insurance Plan (MIP) is established, all staff members holding appointments of three months or longer under the 100 series of the Staff Rules or one month or longer under the 200 series of the Staff Rules may enrol themselves and eligible family members in the Vanbreda plan. Staff members holding appointments of limited duration of three months or longer under the 300 series of the Staff Rules, except those who receive a fixed monthly cash amount towards the cost of health insurance, are also eligible to enrol in the Vanbreda plan.

17. **Staff members are ineligible for coverage under the Vanbreda plan if they or their covered dependants reside in the United States.** Staff members enrolled in the Vanbreda plan while on assignment to field offices or missions must reapply for a United States-based health insurance plan upon return to Headquarters. Coverage in a United States-based health insurance plan following return from mission assignment will become effective from the first day of the month after return to duty at Headquarters.

18. Enrolment in the Vanbreda plan at the time of initial appointment must be accomplished within 31 days of the date of entry on duty. For enrolment purposes, applicants will be required to present (a) a Vanbreda application form, and (b) proof of eligibility in the form of a personnel action (PA) document provided by their respective personnel or administrative officers attesting to the current contractual status. The enrolment of eligible family members requires the provision of evidence of the status of such family members. In most instances, the necessary proof of eligibility will be contained in the personnel action form.

Eligible family members for insurance purposes

19. "Eligible family members" refers to a spouse and one or more eligible children. A spouse is always eligible. A child is eligible to be covered under this scheme until the end of the calendar year in which he or she attains the age of 25 years, provided that he or she is not married and not in full-time employment; disabled children may be eligible for continued coverage after the age of 25 years.

Enrolment at times other than upon entry on duty

20. Staff members appointed under the 100 series of the Staff Rules who have not enrolled themselves and eligible family members within 31 days of the date of their entry on duty have an opportunity once each year to do so. The annual enrolment period generally is set for the first two weeks of June, the specific dates being announced each year sufficiently in advance of the occasion. The effective date of insurance coverage which is applied for during the annual enrolment period is the first day of the following month.

21. Staff members appointed under the 200 series of the Staff Rules (project personnel) are, under staff rule 206.4 (a), required to participate in a medical insurance scheme provided by the United Nations unless exemption from such participation is expressly stated in the letter of appointment. Staff rule 206.4 (b)

provides that such personnel, if appointed for a period of one month or more and participating in a medical insurance scheme provided by the United Nations, may enrol their spouses and dependent children in the scheme. Project personnel who have not enrolled their spouses and eligible dependent children in the Vanbreda plan at the time of initial appointment have an annual opportunity to do so. In the case of project personnel, the annual enrolment opportunity occurs on the anniversary of their entry on duty, and insurance coverage for added dependants will be effective as of that date.

22. Eligible staff members holding appointments of limited duration under the 300 series of the Staff Rules who have not enrolled themselves in the Vanbreda plan at the time of initial appointment because they maintain their own coverage have an annual opportunity to do so. The annual enrolment opportunity occurs on the anniversary of their entry on duty.

23. At times other than the annual enrolment periods referred to in paragraphs 20 to 22 above, staff members (100 and 200 series) and their eligible family members may be enrolled in the Vanbreda plan *only* if at least one of the following events occurs and application for enrolment is made within 31 days thereafter:

(a) Upon transfer from one duty station to another;

(b) Upon return from special leave without pay (see para. 29 below);

(c) Upon assignment to a mission under certain conditions (see para. 30 below);

(d) Upon marriage, birth or legal adoption of a child for coverage of the related family member.

24. Staff members who can demonstrate that they were on mission or annual or sick leave during the annual enrolment opportunity period may enrol within 31 days of their return to their duty station.

25. Applications between enrolment opportunity periods based on circumstances other than those listed in paragraph 23 above or not received within 31 days of the event giving rise to eligibility will not be receivable.

Effective commencement and termination dates of health insurance coverage

26. New coverage for a staff member newly enrolled in the Vanbreda plan commences on the first day of a qualifying contract. If the first day of a qualifying contract occurs later than the first day of the month, coverage commences on that day or the participant may opt for coverage to commence on the first day of the following month. In no event can coverage commence prior to the first day of the qualifying contract. **Health insurance coverage terminates at the end of the month in which the qualifying contract ends.** Therefore, if a contract terminates before the last day of a month, coverage will remain in place until the end of that month. Illness or treatment which occurs within the period of the contract will be covered by the plan. Illness and treatment beyond the contract period is not covered.

Insurance enrolment resulting from loss of employment of spouse

27. To date, a staff member whose health insurance coverage has been provided by the employer of his or her spouse has been ineligible to apply for United Nations

health insurance coverage in the event of the spouse's loss of employment, except on the occasion of the annual enrolment campaign. Loss of coverage under a spouse's health insurance plan by virtue of the spouse's loss of employment is now considered to constitute a qualifying event for the purpose of enrolment in a United Nations plan. Application for enrolment in a United Nations plan under these circumstances must be made within 31 days of the qualifying event. In addition, application for coverage under this provision must be accompanied by an official letter from the spouse's employer, certifying the termination of employment and its effective date.

Staff transferred to another duty station

28. Staff members who transfer to another duty station but who did not have medical insurance prior to the transfer may enrol themselves and eligible family members in the United Nations health insurance plan upon transfer. The enrolment application must be submitted within 31 days of the date of transfer, and the effective date of coverage will be the transfer date at the new duty station. This provision applies also in the case of transfer to Headquarters, in which case the new enrolment will be in one of the health insurance plans offered at Headquarters. Staff members are reminded that if they transfer from one duty station to another and in the process are transferred from one payroll system to another, they should, upon arrival at the new duty station, ensure that their insurance coverage is recorded in the new payroll system so that the deduction of monthly premium contributions may be continued without a break.

Staff on special leave without pay

29. Staff members who are granted special leave without pay are reminded that they may retain health insurance coverage during such periods or may elect to discontinue such coverage for the period of the special leave:

(a) **Insurance coverage maintained during special leave without pay.** If the staff member decides to retain coverage during the period of special leave without pay, the Insurance Service (if payrolled at Headquarters) or the relevant administrative office (if payrolled elsewhere) *must* be informed directly in writing by the staff member of his or her intention at least one month in advance of the commencement of the special leave. At that time, the administrative office concerned will require evidence of the approval of the special leave, together with payment covering the full amount of the cost of the coverage retained (both the staff member's contribution and the Organization's share, since no subsidy is payable during such leave);

(b) **Insurance dropped while on special leave without pay.** Should a staff member decide not to retain insurance coverage while on special leave without pay, no action is required upon commencement of the special leave. However, it is essential that he or she re-enrol in the plan within 31 days of return to duty. Failure to do so will mean that the staff member will be unable to resume participation in the insurance plan until the following annual enrolment opportunity period.

Staff members on mission assignment

30. With regard to staff members going on mission assignment, it has been decided to continue to extend a special health insurance enrolment opportunity to such staff

members. The provisions in this respect, which will apply to all staff members going on mission for six months or more, are as follows:

(a) Staff members who at present are *not* enrolled in the Vanbreda plan will be allowed to enrol themselves and eligible family members. The insurance will become effective on the first day of the month in which the mission assignment commences. Enrolment in the plan in these circumstances must be completed *prior* to the departure of the staff member on mission assignment;

(b) Staff members who elect to enrol in the Vanbreda plan in the circumstances set out in subparagraph (a) above forgo the right to make any further change during the annual enrolment period taking place in the same calendar year as the commencement of the mission assignment. The next opportunity for these staff members to make any change in their insurance coverage will be at the time of the annual enrolment period of the following year;

(c) Staff members going on mission assignment who wish to enrol in the Vanbreda plan or change their present coverage, as provided above, must present evidence to the Insurance Service or to their administrative office, as the case may be, of the mission assignment and its duration.

Staff member married to another staff member

31. Staff members are reminded that in the case of a staff member married to another staff member, the insurance coverage, whether at the two-person or family level, must be carried by the higher-salaried staff member. It should also be noted that if one spouse retires from service with the Organization before the other spouse, the spouse who remains in active service must become the subscriber even if the retired spouse had been the subscriber up to the date of retirement and is eligible for after-service health insurance benefits following separation from service. The spouses in active service must complete the appropriate insurance application form to ensure continuity of coverage for both themselves and their spouse.

Staff members with dependants residing in the United States

32. Staff members are reminded that the Vanbreda plan is designed to provide hospital, medical and dental coverage for participants residing outside the United States. Therefore, staff members residing outside the United States but with covered eligible dependants residing in the United States, other than school or university students with health insurance coverage mandated by the educational institution, should enrol instead in a Headquarters health insurance plan. It should be noted that at Headquarters, dental coverage is a separate plan component for which specific application must be made.

Cessation of coverage of family members

33. The Insurance Service at Headquarters or the relevant administrative office should be notified immediately in writing of changes in the staff member's family which result in a family member ceasing to be eligible (for example, a spouse upon divorce, a child reaching the age of 25 years, marrying or taking up full-time employment). Staff members who wish to discontinue coverage of a family member under a United Nations plan for any other reason may do so at any time, although this is strongly discouraged. The responsibility for initiating the resulting change in

coverage (for example, from "staff member and spouse" to "staff member only" or from "family" to "staff member and spouse") rests with the staff member. It is in the interest of staff members to provide this notification promptly whenever changes in coverage occur in order to benefit from any reduction in premium contribution that may result. Any such change will be implemented on the first of the month following receipt of notification. No retroactive adjustments can be made as a result of failure to provide timely notification of any change to the Insurance Service or administrative office.

After-service health insurance

34. Established policy in regard to eligibility to participate in the United Nations after-service health insurance programme, as well as the related administrative procedures, is set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/394, dated 19 May 1994. Staff members are reminded that, among the eligibility requirements for after-service health insurance coverage, they must be enrolled in a United Nations health insurance scheme at the time of separation from service. A minimum of 5 years of prior coverage in a United Nations or specialized agency health insurance scheme is necessary to qualify for unsubsidized after-service health insurance participation and 10 years of prior coverage for subsidized participation. In both cases, the staff member must be 55 years of age or over at the date of separation and must have elected to receive a monthly retirement benefit or deferred monthly retirement benefit from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. It should also be noted that only family members enrolled with the staff member at the time of separation are eligible for continued coverage under the after-service health insurance programme. **Former staff members who reside in the United States are reminded that they are ineligible for participation in the Vanbreda plan and that they must switch to a Headquarters plan within 31 days of taking up residence in the United States.**

Retirees who return to active service

35. Retirees who return to active service with the Organization may temporarily be ineligible for health insurance coverage under the United Nations after-service health insurance programme. Eligibility for enrolment in the after-service health insurance programme is contingent upon eligibility to receive a monthly benefit from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. If as a result of a new post-retirement appointment the former staff member again becomes an active staff member, the monthly pension benefit is suspended and, for the duration of the suspension of pension benefits, eligibility to participate in the after-service health insurance programme is also suspended. In such cases, it is the obligation of the individual concerned to promptly notify the Insurance Service of the new active appointment and to make the necessary arrangements for a switch in health insurance enrolment from after-service health insurance status to that of an active staff member. When the active appointment ends, the Insurance Service must again be informed promptly so that the after-service health insurance status can be reactivated.

III. Conversion privileges

36. Participants (subscribers) who cease employment with the United Nations and do not qualify for after-service health insurance benefits may arrange for medical coverage with Vanbreda under the terms of an "individual health insurance plan", provided that application is made within 31 days of termination of coverage under the United Nations group policy. Covered eligible dependants may also participate in the Vanbreda individual insurance plan along with the subscriber. However, children over the age of 25 are not eligible for health insurance conversion under the Vanbreda plan. In the case of a spouse of a staff member whose eligibility for coverage ceases as a result of divorce, application for medical coverage under the above arrangement must be made within 31 days of termination of coverage under the United Nations group medical coverage. The conversion privilege, which is part of the United Nations group contract with Vanbreda, means that the insurer cannot refuse to insure an applicant and that no certification of medical eligibility is required. However, this privilege does not mean that the same insurance premium rates or schedule of benefits in effect for the United Nations group policy will be offered in respect of an individual health insurance plan. **The conversion privilege is designed to provide coverage during a period of transition to more permanent health insurance coverage. The Vanbreda conversion privilege grants coverage up to a maximum of 24 months.** Details concerning conversion to an individual insurance policy may be obtained by communicating directly with Vanbreda at the following address:

Vanbreda International
Plantin en Moretuslei 299
2140 Antwerp, Belgium
Fax No.: 00 32 3 272 39 69
Telephone No.: 00 32 3 217 57 42
E-mail: gp1@vanbreda.be

IV. Claims and enquiries

Basis for claim reimbursement in United States dollars

37. Claim reimbursement is made in United States dollars, converted from the currency in which the hospital, medical or dental expenses have been incurred. Reimbursement in United States dollars is based on the United Nations operational rate of exchange in effect on the date that the medical and dental expenses are incurred and, in the case of hospital expenses, on the date that the hospital bill is rendered.

Mailing addresses

38. Participants must inform their administrative office of any change in their mailing address in order to ensure that identification cards, reimbursements and explanations of benefits are delivered promptly and appropriately.

Where to address claims and benefit enquiries

39. Although the staff of the Insurance Service is available to assist staff members in administrative matters concerning participation in the Vanbreda plan, claims

questions should always be taken up on the first instance directly with Vanbreda. The address and telephone and fax numbers of Vanbreda are as follows:

- Postal address: Vanbreda International, Postbox 69, B-2140 Antwerp, Belgium
- Dedicated telephone number: + 32 3 217 68 42
- Dedicated e-mail address: mcc001@vanbreda.be
- Fax number: + 32 3 663 28 55

40. Annex I to the present circular contains a summary of the benefits payable under the Vanbreda plan.

41. Annex II contains a recapitulation of the provisions pertaining to hospitalization in the United States.

42. Annex III sets out relevant details concerning 16 surgical procedures for which a second opinion will be reimbursed in full.

Annex I

Vanbreda insurance scheme

1. The Vanbreda insurance scheme provides for reimbursement of medical, hospital and dental treatment costs up to a maximum of $250,000 per insured participant per calendar year. In addition to the maximum reimbursement per calendar year, certain maxima per treatment, procedure or service may also be applied on the basis of a determination of "reasonable and customary" charges for the benefit at the place of treatment. Fees for treatments, procedures or services which may be considered by Vanbreda to be excessive compared with prevailing fee levels will be reimbursed up to the reasonable and customary level for the geographical area in which such medical services are received.

2. The scheme is subject to the following reimbursement provisions and limitations:

(a) Under the basic coverage component, reimbursement in respect of medical treatment prescribed by qualified doctors is limited to 80 per cent of the costs incurred, including doctors' fees;

(b) Under the major medical coverage component, 80 per cent of the remaining unpaid costs is paid, subject to an annual deductible (co-payment) of $200 per participant and $600 per family;

(c) The following example illustrates how reimbursement in respect of basic coverage and major medical coverage operates:

	United States dollars
(i) Basic coverage	
Cost of medical treatment (if reasonable and customary)	3 200
Reimbursement under basic coverage (80 per cent)	-2 560
Residual (20 per cent)	640
(ii) Major medical coverage	
Basis for major medical coverage (20 per cent residual remaining under basic coverage)	640
Annual (calendar year) deductible	-200
Basis for major medical coverage after application of deductible	440
Reimbursement under major medical coverage: 80 per cent of expenses in excess of deductible ($440 x 80 per cent)	352
(iii) Total reimbursement (recapitulation of (i) and (ii))	
Basic coverage	2 560
Major medical coverage	+352
Total reimbursement	2 912
Participant's total out-of-pocket expense	288

(d) The cost of hospital services (excluding doctors' fees) is reimbursed at the rate of 100 per cent of the reasonable and customary costs involved, including

such items as bed and board, general nursing service, use of the operating room and equipment, use of the recovery room and equipment, laboratory examinations, X-ray examinations and drugs and medicines for use in the hospital. For hospitalization in Europe and in North America, the standard of accommodation is limited to semi-private room care, that is, two or more patients in the same room, except that, under the following circumstances, subject to the provision of documentation satisfactory to the insurer, private-room care will be reimbursed in full up to the daily limit specified in subparagraph 2 (e) (i) below:

(i) When the nature and gravity of the illness requires private-room care and the need for such care is substantiated by the attending physician;

(ii) When the patient is admitted on an emergency basis to a hospital that has semi-private accommodation but none is available at the time;

(iii) When the patient is admitted to a hospital that does not have any semi-private accommodation, that is, it has no standard of accommodation other than private rooms and general wards;

Europe and North America are defined for this purpose as Europe, including Malta, Cyprus and Turkey (European portion), and Canada and the United States of America;

(e) Reimbursement for hospital accommodation expenses is subject to daily room rate caps. These caps will be maintained in 2004, as follows:

(i) *Europe and North America*. The maximum reimbursement per day for hospital accommodation (room and board) in Europe and North America is $600;

(ii) *Israel*. The daily room rate cap applicable in Israel is $700;

(iii) *Rest of world*. A $330 per day reimbursement ceiling is applicable to all locations other than Europe, North America and Israel;

(f) Well-child care/immunizations are covered at 80 per cent of the reasonable and customary fee levels under the basic component of the plan, and a further 80 per cent under the major medical component, if applicable, in accordance with the following schedule:

Well-child care to the age of 7 years:

6 visits per year aged 0 to 1 year

2 visits per year aged 1 to 2 years

1 visit per year aged 2 to 7 years

1 visit every 24 months from age 7 to 19 years;

(g) The cost of dental treatment is reimbursable at the rate of 80 per cent up to a maximum sum of $900 per insured participant per calendar year. The cost of dento-facial orthopaedics is covered only if the treatment is started before the patient has reached his or her fifteenth birthday, and reimbursement is provided only during a treatment period of four years;

(h) The cost of outpatient mental health treatment by a psychiatrist is covered, as are the services of a licensed psychoanalyst, a licensed psychologist or a

licensed psychiatric social worker. The cost in respect of insured participants is reimbursable at the rate of 80 per cent of the reasonable and customary fee level and to a maximum reimbursement of $1,000 per insured person in any 12-month period;

(i) The cost of treatment for substance (alcohol and/or drug) abuse is covered, under certain conditions. The coverage includes inpatient treatment for detoxification and rehabilitation at a facility certified for such treatment, subject to the prior approval of Vanbreda. Such treatment will normally be limited to 30 days in a calendar year. In addition, the plan covers outpatient counselling for the purpose of diagnosis and treatment. The costs of outpatient counselling are reimbursable at the rate of 50 per cent and to a maximum reimbursement of $1,000 for not more than 50 visits per insured person in any consecutive 12-month period. Of these 50 visits, up to 20 may be allocated to counsel covered family members of the participant undergoing treatment for the substance abuse problem;

(j) The cost of radiological treatment is reimbursable at the rate of 80 per cent of the reasonable and customary fee level under the basic component and a further 80 per cent under the major medical component, provided that the patient has been referred to the specialist by the doctor in attendance;

(k) A routine eye examination is covered every 24 months at 80 per cent of the reasonable and customary fee level of the plan, and a further 80 per cent under the major medical component, if applicable;

(l) The cost of hearing aids and optical lenses is covered, with the limitations set out below, so long as the staff member or the participating family member has been a participant in the Vanbreda scheme for one year or more:

(i) *Hearing aids*. Reimbursement at 80 per cent (only basic coverage, no major medical coverage), with a maximum of $300 per apparatus, including the related examination, and a maximum of one apparatus per ear in any period of three years;

(ii) *Optical lenses*. Reimbursement at 80 per cent (only basic coverage, no major medical coverage), with a maximum of $60 per lens and a maximum of two lenses in any period of two years. These maxima will also apply to surgical or laser treatment for the correction of refraction;

(m) The cost of two blood tests per year for the human immunodeficiency virus;

(n) A mammography screening (examination) comprising the following provisions:

(i) Upon recommendation of a physician, a mammogram may be covered at any age for persons having a prior history of breast cancer or whose mother or sister has had a prior history of breast cancer;

(ii) A single baseline mammogram will be covered for persons aged from 35 through 39 years;

(iii) A mammogram will be covered every two years, or more frequently upon the recommendation of a physician, for persons aged from 40 through 49 years, inclusive;

(iv) An annual mammogram will be covered for persons aged 50 and older;

Mammography screenings are covered whether carried out in a medical provider's office, hospital outpatient department, hospital ambulatory surgery department or ambulatory surgery facility, or another facility that is licensed to provide mammography screenings. The screening is covered in accordance with the reimbursement provisions and limitations set out above;

(o) Urological examinations and Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) screenings are covered as follows:

(i) In asymptomatic males over the age of 40 years, one urological exam and PSA screening is covered every two years. An annual exam and screening is covered after the age of 75 years;

(ii) For all other males, including men with a family history of prostate cancer, aged 40 years and over, one urological exam and PSA screening per year is covered;

Urological examinations and PSA screenings are covered in accordance with the reimbursement provisions and limitations set out above.

3. The insurance scheme does not cover:

(a) Periodic preventive health examinations;

(b) Injuries as a consequence of voluntary or intentional action on the part of the insured participant;

(c) Insured participants who are mobilized or who volunteer for military service in time of war;

(d) Injuries resulting from motor-vehicle racing or dangerous competitions in respect of which betting is allowed (normal sports competitions are covered);

(e) The consequences of insurrections or riots if, by taking part, the insured participant has broken the applicable laws; and the consequences of brawls, except in cases of self-defence;

(f) Spa cures, rejuvenation cures or cosmetic treatment (cosmetic surgery is covered where it is necessary as the result of an accident for which coverage is provided);

(g) The direct or indirect results of explosions, heat release or irradiation produced by transmutation of the atomic nucleus or by radioactivity or resulting from radiation produced by the artificial acceleration of nuclear particles;

(h) Expenses for, or in connection with, travel or transportation, whether by ambulance or otherwise, except that charges for professional ambulance service used to transport the insured participant between the place where he or she is injured by an accident or stricken by disease and the first hospital where treatment is given will not be excluded;

(i) In-vitro fertilization;

(j) Expenses which are not deemed to be reasonable and customary.

4. In respect of the 16 surgical procedures listed in annex III to the present circular, the cost of a second opinion will be reimbursed at 100 per cent and, should a participant desire a third opinion, the cost of that opinion will also be reimbursed

at the rate of 100 per cent. No penalty will be assessed in cases in which surgery is performed without the benefit of a second opinion.

5. Subscribers should note that claims for reimbursement must be submitted to Vanbreda no later than two years from the date on which the medical expenses were incurred. *Claims received by Vanbreda later than two years after the date on which the expense was incurred will not be eligible for reimbursement.*

Annex II

Provisions pertaining to hospitalization in the United States of America

1. While a participant is free to seek admission to a hospital in the United States of America without providing any notification to Vanbreda, reimbursement for such hospitalization will be subject to a limit of $600 in respect of the daily semi-private room rate. Thus, if a participant chooses a hospital at which the daily semi-private room rate exceeds $600, the cost of the daily room rate above $600 will be borne entirely by the participant. There will be no change in the reimbursement for other services. In this connection, it should be noted that hospital costs vary considerably throughout the United States, and costs may exceed the $600 reimbursement ceiling, particularly in parts of California, Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Texas and Washington, D.C., where the costs may be much higher in certain hospitals.

2. The *$600 limit will not apply* to semi-private hospital accommodation in three specific circumstances:

(a) In connection with medical evacuation to any hospital in the United States authorized by the United Nations Medical Director;

(b) In cases of **bona fide** medical emergency arising while in the United States;

(c) In situations where the necessary medical treatment can only be provided at a hospital where the daily semi-private room rate exceeds $600 and to avoid the obligation to meet daily room-rate expenses in excess of $600. In such cases, confirmation must be obtained from Vanbreda prior to hospital admission.

3. Please note that staff members, former staff members and their eligible dependants who **RESIDE** in the United States are not eligible for coverage under the Vanbreda plan.

Annex III

Second surgical opinion requirement

1. There is no reimbursement penalty for failure to provide evidence of a second opinion in connection with any surgery. Whenever feasible, however, participants are encouraged to seek a second surgical opinion, in particular for the 16 surgical procedures listed below. For this reason, Vanbreda will reimburse at 100 per cent the cost of a second opinion rendered by a qualified physician in connection with these 16 surgical procedures. If the second opinion does not agree with the first, a third opinion may be sought and will also be fully reimbursed. Please note that the second (or third) opinion must be provided by a physician not associated or in practice with the physician who originally recommended or proposed to perform the surgery.

2. The 16 surgical procedures for which second opinions will be reimbursed at the rate of 100 per cent are:

	Procedure	*Explanation*
1	Bunionectomy	Removal of bunions
2	Cholecystectomy	Removal of gall bladder
3	Dilation and curettage	Dilation of cervix and scraping of uterus
4	Excision of cataracts	Removal of cataracts
5	Haemorrhoidectomy	Removal of haemorrhoids
6	Hernia (inguinal) repair	Repair of hernia in the groin
7	Hysterectomy	Removal of uterus
8	Knee surgery	Knee operation
9	Laminectomy	Removal of part of spine
10	Mastectomy: partial or complete	Partial or complete removal of breast tissue
11	Prostatectomy	Removal of prostate
12	Septo-rhinoplasty	Nose surgery for functional improvement
13	Spinal fusion	Surgical welding of spine segments
14	Tonsillectomy and/or adenoidectomy	Removal of tonsils and/or adenoids
15	Varicose veins	Removal and tying of varicose veins
16	Coronary artery bypass	Heart surgery to bypass one or more blocked arteries feeding the heart

United Nations ST/IC/2003/66

Secretariat

18 December 2003

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff at Headquarters

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **After-school recreation and study programme for United Nations children**

1. The after-school recreation and study programme is open to 5- to 11-year-old children whose parents work at the United Nations, delegations, consulates or specialized agencies of the United Nations system. Conducted under the auspices of an independent Board of Trustees, the programme offers arts and crafts, athletic activities, dance and creative movement, games and homework under the supervision of qualified staff.

2. Begun over 33 years ago to assist working parents who were not in a position to provide after-school care for their young children, the programme enjoys limited subsidies, which make it possible to open it up to parents at the cost of $500 per child per semester. This fee represents only a part of the actual cost per child incurred by the programme. Special family circumstances will be taken into consideration for those families with a net joint income below $30,000. Depending upon the demand, further criteria may be established by the Board of Trustees.

3. The spring 2004 semester will run from Monday to Friday, beginning Monday, 2 February 2004, from 3.15 p.m. to 5.45 p.m. Transportation will be provided from the United Nations International School building at 25th Street to the Secretariat building, 42nd Street and First Avenue entrance. Other arrangements will have to be made on an individual basis for children coming from other schools.

4. Interested parents are invited to complete the attached application form and return it no later than Monday, 20 January 2004 to room S-2938.

5. Staff members are encouraged to enrol their children between the ages of 5 and 11 years in the programme. It is assumed that parents who do not choose to enrol their children are making other arrangements. If staff members require that their children meet them and remain for any length of time within any of the Secretariat buildings, the Administration suggests that parents ensure that their children respect the working areas of other staff and maintain the proper decorum.

6. For further information, please call extension 3.8730.

7. *Note premises*: Dag Hammarskjöid Library, lower level, room S-B1-52.

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 30 June 2004.

03-66374 (E) 221203

Application for the after-school recreation and study programme for United Nations children

Spring semester 2004

Renewal ☐

New application ☐

Instructions: Please answer all questions. Write NONE when applicable. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Child's name _____

Birth date _____ Sex _____ Grade _____

School currently attending _____ Location _____

Previously enrolled in after-school recreation and study programme? Yes/No

Name of parent or guardian _____ Room _____ Ext. _____

Home address _____ Tel. _____

Grade and step _____ Education grant: Yes/No Nationality _____

Name of spouse _____

Does your spouse work in the United Nations or a specialized agency? Yes/No

If yes, please give grade and step _____ Education grant: Yes/No

Room _____ Ext. _____

If not, please give spouse's (a) Occupation _____

(b) Employer _____ Address _____ Tel. _____

Information on other dependent children:

	Child's name	Sex	Birth date	School	Location of school
1.					
2.					
3.					

While the programme, to the extent of its capability, is open to all United Nations parents, it is a subsidized programme established essentially for those working parents who are not in a position to provide after-school care for their young children. Therefore, all parents are expected to pay $500 for each child per semester, which represents only part of the actual cost per child incurred by the programme. Special family circumstances will, however, be taken into consideration for those families with a net joint income below $30,000.

How many persons does your family salary provide for? _____

Is your net family income* above $30,000? Yes/No

You may be asked to provide supporting information at a later date.

Certification

I certify that the above information is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ Signature _____

Payment made to ASRSP is attached. This fee is non-refundable unless the programme is discontinued. **There will be a late fee of $50.**

The hours are from 3.15 p.m. to 5.45 p.m. Any early arrival must be supervised by the accompanying adult until 3.15 p.m. The programme cannot assume responsibility for any child brought to its premises prior to the scheduled opening time. Children must be picked up at the latest by 5.45 p.m. Children will be asked to leave the programme if parents fail to pick them up on time on two occasions. In such an event, there will be no refund of the fee.

* Net income is defined as salaries, post adjustment, education grant and dependency, housing and any other allowances, minus United Nations staff assessment and United Nations pension contribution.

United Nations ST/IC/2003/67

Secretariat

30 December 2003

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2004 competitive examination for Arabic interpreters**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take the competitive examination for Arabic interpreters in **2004**, in accordance with the provisions of ST/AI/1998/7 of 23 March 1998.

2. A competitive examination for Arabic interpreters will be held on 7 and 8 April 2004 in New York, Geneva, Vienna, Cairo and other locations, as necessary, according to the number and location of qualified candidates invited to take the examination and the availability of necessary technical equipment. The purpose of this examination is to establish a roster from which present and future vacancies for Arabic interpreters will be filled.

3. The examination is open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as to qualified external candidates. Staff members from subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or special mission are considered external candidates for the purpose of this examination. Staff members who pass the examination and are selected for inclusion in the roster will be assigned to fill vacancies as they occur in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. Assignments are subject to rotation and interpreters may thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations according to the needs of the Organization. Interpreters are expected to serve a **minimum of five years** in a language post. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 12 through 14 below.

4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Arabic as their main language;[1]

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2004 .

03-67534 (E) 020104

(b) Have a perfect command of Arabic and an excellent knowledge of English **or French**. The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files;

(c) Hold a degree or an equivalent qualification from a university or institution of equivalent status at which Arabic is the language of instruction, and have 200 days of experience as conference interpreters or 200 days of work experience in the field of translation, editing, verbatim reporting or related fields. Alternatively, candidates must hold a university degree from a recognized school of interpretation. The Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, admit a candidate graduating from a university whose principal language of instruction is other than Arabic, provided that he/she has adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic.

5. In order to meet the Organization's need to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100-series appointments and who are over the age of 56 by the deadline for submission of applications (13 February 2004) will not be eligible to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

6. The requirement for a university degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status mentioned in paragraph 4 (c) above may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary educational qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary educational qualifications from an establishment at which the principal language of instruction is Arabic, in addition to five years of continuous service with the United Nations Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

7. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. In instances where a large number of applications are received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified candidates based on a review of their qualifications that are over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. Convoked candidates may be required to submit evidence of degrees and/or relevant experience prior to convocation. **The Board's decisions are final.**

8. For candidates with a perfect command of English, and with Arabic as a main language, the examination will consist of two parts:

(a) Simultaneous interpretation into Arabic from recordings of three speeches delivered in English (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording);

(b) Simultaneous interpretation into English from recordings of three speeches delivered in Arabic (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording).

9. For candidates with a perfect command of French, and with Arabic as a main language, the examination will consist of two parts:

(a) Simultaneous interpretation into Arabic from recordings of three speeches delivered in French (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording);

(b) Simultaneous interpretation into French from recordings of three speeches delivered in Arabic (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per recording).

10. On the basis of the results of this examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to an interview. The Board will interview the selected candidates to assess general interest, professional experience, knowledge of the United Nations and of current events, personality, willingness to serve at any duty station, adaptability to the prevailing working conditions in the Arabic Interpretation Section and, in particular, ability to work as a member of a team. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited for an interview should **not** assume that they will be offered an assignment.

11. On the basis of the overall results of the examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the roster. All candidates admitted to the examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. The Board's recommendations are **not** subject to appeal. The Board **does not** release individual scores/results.

12. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as Arabic interpreters for a trial period of two years. Staff members at the P-1 level or below will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned at their respective levels.

13. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Human Resources Management will be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed in their interpretation functions at the P-3 level. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

14. In order to service meetings of the Security Council or the General Assembly, interpreters are often called upon to work outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

15. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it, **not later than 13 February 2004**, to:

2004 Competitive Examination for Arabic Interpreters
Examinations and Tests Section
Division for Organizational Development
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575
United Nations Secretariat
New York, New York 10017
Fax No.: (212) 963-3683
E-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org

Applications may be sent by e-mail, fax or mail. However, since all mail addressed to offices at Headquarters undergoes a process of sterilization and radiation, mailed applications may be delayed for up to four weeks. To the extent possible, applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to submit their applications early, and preferably

by e-mail or fax. Applications that are incomplete or are received after the deadline will **not** be considered.

16. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, these staff members are requested to return their applications directly to the Division for Organizational Development through the Chief Administrative Officer or Director of the United Nations information centre of their respective duty stations by 13 February 2004, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Division for Organizational Development, Office of Human Resources Management.

Notes

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language into which the candidate is best able to interpret. Candidates' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

Application[a]

2004 competitive examination for Arabic interpreters

Index No.[b] | | | | | | |

Last name | | | | | | | | | | | | | Category | | Level | |

First name | | | | | | | | | | | | | Male | | Female | |

Date of entry on duty Month | | Year | | | | |

Type of contract _____ Expiration date _____

Department/office[c] _____ Duty station _____

Room No. _____ Tel. extension _____ Fax extension _____ E-mail _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes | | Year | | | | | No | |

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes | | Year | | | | | No | |

If yes, which examination(s) _____

What is your main language?[d] | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

A. Knowledge of other languages

Language	*United Nations language programme (indicate highest level and date)*	*Courses taken at other institutions (name and location)*

B. Indicate your ability in each of the languages mentioned above

Language	*Read*		*Understand*		*Speak*		*Write*	
	Easily	*Not easily*	*Easily*	*Not easily*	*Fluently*	*Not fluently*	*Easily*	*Not easily*

C. University degree or equivalent or post-secondary educational qualifications

Name of institution[c] *(include place and country)*	*Language of instruction*	*Attended (month/year)*		*Degree or equivalent*[c]	*Main field of study*
		From	*To*		

D. Secondary school qualifications

Name of institution[c] *(include place and country)*	*Language of instruction*	*Attended (month/year)*		*Certificate or equivalent*[c]	*Main field of study*
		From	*To*		

E. Describe work experience (giving dates and length of time) in conference interpretation or related fields, if any

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ Signature _____

I have read information circular ST/IC/2003/67 and I understand that, if I am successful in the 2004 competitive examination for Arabic interpreters and recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as an Arabic interpreter will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 12 through 14 of that circular.

Date _____ Signature _____

Notes

[a] Staff members applying for this examination **must complete this application form**. Proof of degrees and certificates as set out in paragraph 4 (b) of ST/IC/2003/67 will be required from all candidates who are successful in the examination prior to the interview. This application form is for staff members only, external candidates have to complete a P-11 form.

[b] Normally appears on your grounds pass, monthly salary statement and P.5 personnel action forms. If not, please contact your personnel officer to obtain your number.

[c] Staff members should indicate the department or office to which they are currently assigned, e.g., DGACM, ECE, UNCTAD, UNOG, UNOV or other (please specify).

[d] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates' claims to Arabic as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

[e] Give exact name and title in original language. Do not translate or equate.